

critical digest

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New York Theatre Week

The Way of the World-Cherry Lane 9/29/54. Proscenium Productions presents revival of Congreve's Restoration comedy with Gerry Fleming, Louis Edmonds, Fritz Weaver. Directed by Warren Enters...The Boy Friend- Royale 9/30/54. Feuer & Martin present English musical based on 1930s comedies with Julie Andrews, John Hower, Book, music, lyrics by Sandy Wilson, Directed by Vida Hope...The World of Sholom Aleichem-Barbizon Plaza 10/1/54. Rachel Productions re-open Arnold Perl's adaption of 3 Yiddish tales in English with Morris Carnovsky and Jacob Ben-Ami...The Clanestine Marriage- Provincetown Playhouse 10/2/54. Players Theatre presents revival of David Garrick's 18th century comedy with Jacqueline Brookes, staged by Jack Landau...Blues, Ballads and Sir-Songs- Bijou- 10/4/54. Libby Holman's one woman show, star accompanied by Gerald Cook

Digests of Current Week Theatre Reviews

All Summer Long- Coronet 9/23/54. Diverse notices were filed on Robert Anderson's new play presented by the Playwrights Company. Times, News, Mirror, World Telegram & Sun reviewers thought it was a sincere, well written and well acted piece, while remainder thought script failed to live up to fine acting by John Kerr, Clay Hall, Ed Begley and June Walker. Taken on its own terms as a character study, Atkinson, Times, found it a poignant and beautiful play. Chapman, News, shared praise among all concerned, including director Alan Schneider. Coleman, Mirror, billed it as a stimulating drama. Con side was headed by Kerr, Herald Tribune, who thought it was made of statements rather than of unselfconscious flesh and blood. Post critic feared it failed to add up to a properly moving drama. Too languid and mild most of the time, complained McClain, Journal American.

Home is the Hero- Booth - 9/22/54. Majority of NY daily critics vetoed the new Irish drama by and with Walter Macken. Most admitted acting in Theatre Guild production directed by Worthington Miner was from fair to first rate, but the majority of the critics found little of interest in the drama. McClain, Journal American, filed the sole outright pro notice, marking play a good modern Irish character study. Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun, thought all of cast except author turned in fine performances. Watts, Post, noted that despite some effective scenes the play was gravely disappointing. Times aisle sitter summed up his own notice as a dull play about a disagreeable fellow.

Midsummer Night's Dream- Met. Opera 9/21/54. Taken as spectacle most of the NY drama critics were impressed with the Old Vic presentation of the Shakespeare story. But taken as straight Bard, most were frankly disappointed. News, Mirror, and World Telegram & Sun critics rated it as spectacle alone and loved it. They agreed with majority that Moira Shearer's dancing abilities far exceeds her acting ability. Many on the "con" side admitted they couldn't hear many of the star's speeches. Times man questioned wisdom of joining Shakespeare text and Mendelssohn music, suggesting that they duplicate each other.

' Off Broadway '

Ring Round the Moon will be presented by 840 Theatre, West Side YMCA, on Oct 15-17, 22-24... In Splendid Error, a new play by William Branch, will be presented at Greenwich Mews Oct 18 with William Marshall in the lead.

Group One will present Stephanie a new play by Gil Orlovitz beginning Sept 27 at Amato Theatre, 159 Bleecker. Performances Sept 27-29, Oct 4-6. Free.

The Heiress will be presented as the second Equity Library Theatre play of the season... Bill Penn, Neil Laurence, Otis Bigelow, Joanne Woodward, Judith Paige and Connie Wilson have been added to cast of Broadway Chapel Players' production of Noah which opens Oct 10.

The New Repertory Theatre has been organized by Leo Kers and Harry Horner. Joseph Kramm's The Ensemble retains the rights to A Moon for the Misbegotten and My Heart's in the Highlands.

Theatre Perspective is presenting Miss Julia at Royal Playhouse, 62 E 4th on Sundays and Mondays only... The Dybbuk opening at 4th St Theatre, 83 E 4, has been pushed forward to Oct 26.

' Changes in Chart '

SHOWS THAT CLOSED: Cretan Woman, Major Barbara, Pony Cart.

ADD OFF BROADWAY: Way of World at Cherry Lane, Clandestine Marriage at Provincetown.

THEATRE CHANGES: By the Beautiful Sea to Imperial.

' Theatre TV & Radio Notes '

Old Vic disc of Midsummer Night's Dream will be played on WQXR Oct 2 at 10 PM and Oct 3 at 3 PM... "City Center" revue based on music and drama activities of NYC City Center will be broadcast on NBC TV Oct 10, Max Leibman producer with Judy Holliday starred... The Man Who Came to Dinner will be seen on CBS TV Best of Broadway series Oct 13 with Merle Oberon, Joan Bennett, Bert Lahr, Zazu Pitts and Buster Keaton... Joseph Cotton and Margaret Sullivan will star in NBC TV spectacular production of State of the Union Nov 15. ... Babes in Arms will be second Ethel Mer- man CBS TV show, first will be Panama Hattb.

' West Coast '

Bernardine opens at Pasadena Playhouse Oct 14 for 4 week run with Don Lup-ton and Eileen Edwards... Academy Players production of Three Wishes for Jamie features Dick Foote, Marie Gibson of original Broadway cast... Palisades Players' will next present I Am A Camera.

' Vaudeville '

Lee Davis, Roy Douglas, Don Phillips, Six Sons of Morocco, and George Nicholas are featured at new Palace stage show. Film is "The Shanghai Story" with Ruth Roman.

' Theatre Book Comments '

"Future Indicative" by Noel Coward is an entertaining account of the theatre worker's war years, okays Watts, Post. Co-ward proves again that the theatre inevitably leaves its mark on those who make it their life's work.

' Green Room Department '

PROPER ATTITUDE...Why don't we ever think of bringing the masses to the theatre instead of always "bringing the theatre to the masses," asks Kerr, Herald Tribune. Critic thinks there is an awful aura of handing-down-the word making patronizing overtures to the "ordinary" customer. He also wonders if it wouldn't be a good idea to keep the fact that things are tough in the theatre a deep, dark secret.

COLUMN TIPS...Tolu and producer Richard Aldrich are at the screaming stage, whispers Winchell...Police hunting character who claims he is Watts, Post, and asks for house seats, reports Wilson, Post...Hayride will stick it out indefinitely hears Walker.

WRITERS-OLD & NEW...Atkinson, Times, is willing to join the throng with a devout wish that Thornton Wilder might take up in the theatre where he left off 12 years ago. He is an enlightened man who is especially valuable at the present time...Paul Vincent Carroll, whose new play The Wayward Saint, will be produced this fall by Theatre Guild, makes a Big Comeback via this script, predicts Nathan, Journal American Play calls for delicacy of treatment filtered through directorial strength if it is to attain its rightful theatrical end...The young playwright must learn to listen to a suggestion as though it were not necessarily a cunning trap to kill his brainchild, warns, Kerr, Herald Tribune.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...Cole Porter was urged by Pearson, NBC Critic at Large, to be more original and less maudlin in his lyrics...NY drama critics have an exceedingly low boiling point if they can grow so outraged over such a pleasant and harmless little entertainment as Hayride, notes Watts, Post...Chapman, News, suggests that Aldrich & Myers take a display ad thanking Tallulah Bankhead for making an entertaining evening out of a sloppy little comedy.

LIFE BLOOD OF THEATRE...Each fall the kids come in their thousands to Broadway, and each spring all but a pitiful handful will know in their innermost hearts that they have failed, sums up Burr, Playbill. The process is rough on the young actors, he admits, but it provides the life-blood of the theatre. There is no stopping the annual invasion, despite warnings, difficulties and the known scarcity of acting jobs. 95% of the neophytes will barely survive the blasts of winter. Others will continue to struggle along until money or the complacency of parents or self confidence or hope itself trickles away.

' Pros & Cons by TMK '

A Midsummer Night's Dream is so breathtaking and beautiful that only a drama critic could find fault with the fact that some of the speeches by the English actresses in the Old Vic company are inaudible. The acre full of actors, dancers, sets, costumes, musicians have buried Shakespeare's silly comedy and have transformed the Met. into a delightful dreamland.

All Summer Long is a well done character study of two brave, bitter brothers. Though the parents in the new Robert Anderson play are portrayed and acted as trite stereotypes, the portrayals of the two sons by Clay Hall and John Kerr make the play important and well worth seeing. The playwright's understanding of youth exceeds his understanding of uncomplicated adults.

America's newest legit theatre opened Sept 27 at Hollywood and Vice, Hollywood. What Every Woman Knows starring Helen Hayes opened the rebuilt house which has been used for the past 17 years as the Lux Radio Playhouse. Huntington Hartford is the owner and Richard Skinner is the general manager of the 1050 seat house which features a lobby bar.

Plays

Hayride did not close last week and will continue through Oct 2 at least... By the Beautiful Sea moves to Imperial Oct 4... Fanny which opens at Majestic Nov 4 must out 1 hour... The Year The Yankees Lost the play will be made into a musical and produced by Griffin-Prince-Brisson... Burns night dramatic reading production sponsored by Actors Equity opened tour at Bethlehem, Pa.

People

Betsy von Furstenberg lost her appeal for reinstatement in Oh Men, Oh Women at Actors Equity Council meeting. She was charged with missing performances while keeping social engagements, and she admitted "doctoring" an actor's onstage drink... Kay Medford will appear in Black Bye d Susan... Yvona Lindfors will star in Anastasia... Harold Clurman will conduct a midnight workshop in acting at Stella Adler Theatre Studio starting Oct 4... Robert Helpmann will act, dance and direct for Old Vic tour of Australia, his home country... Errol Edward Hart, former drama editor of NY Evening Sun, NY Evening Post, died at age 81 after a long illness.

Other Broadways

Fred Miller has accepted chairmanship of a \$105,000 campaign to establish a professional theatre company in Milwaukee under the direction of Mrs Mary John, president of Drama, Inc. A 20 week season with a resident company headed by a star is planned... Porgy and Bess opened in Venice... Twin bill of Terence Rattigan plays opened in London under title Seperate Tables with Eric Portman and Margaret Leighton won raves of critics.

Theatre Book Notes

The Golden Apple text has been published by Random House... "Renunciation as a Tragic Focus" by Eugene Falk (Minneapolis) is a study of plays by Sophocles, Corneille and Maeterlinck.

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